

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POINTER

NOVEMBER 2019

## Prepare for the Winter Elements

Cold weather and freezing temperatures are right around the corner as are the host of outdoor activities that many enjoy in the late fall and throughout the winter. However, prolonged exposure to cold weather can lead to a serious health condition called hypothermia. Recognizing and treating the symptoms are keys to keeping healthy during the upcoming season. Be prepared when traveling and enjoying winter this season.

### What is Hypothermia?

According to the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), a person's body begins to lose heat faster than it can produce it when exposed to cold temperatures. The resulting abnormally low body temperature is known as hypothermia. The condition affects the brain, making it difficult for the person to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia very dangerous as the person may not realize it is happening and will not take action to help themselves. If you notice symptoms in someone and the body temperature reading is below 95° F, seek medical care immediately. If medical care isn't available, follow [CDC's guidelines](#) on how to properly warm the person.

### Recognizing the Signs of Hypothermia

The greatest chance for developing hypothermia is during very cold temperatures. However, the CDC says it can occur at cool temperatures (above 40° F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

The warning signs of hypothermia are as follows.

Adults:	Infants:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shivering, exhaustion</li> <li>• Confusion, fumbling</li> <li>• Memory loss, slurred speech</li> <li>• Drowsiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bright red, cold skin</li> <li>• Very low energy</li> </ul>

## Plan Ahead Before Your Winter Travels

Winter traveling is right around the corner as we head into the holiday season. For long distance driving trips it is important to plan ahead. Be sure to watch weather reports and delay trips if bad weather is expected. If it is absolutely necessary to travel, let friends or family know your route and schedule. Be sure to check in with friends or family regularly. You should always keep at least half a tank of gas in your vehicle, and an additional power source to charge a cell phone. If you do get stuck in a storm, stay in your vehicle and place a brightly colored flag or piece of material where rescuers can easily see it. Most importantly, make sure you have an emergency kit in your car in case you get stranded in a severe winter storm while driving.

